

ID: 18963, Title: COS - Oversight & Allegations

Full Name:

Approval Route:

Clare Trotter > Teresa Klingspohn > Jim Standen > Haley Rhonda > DM > Teresa Klingspohn > COS (for filing and closing)

Assigned To: Trotter, Clare ENV:EX Rush: No Briefing Note - Information Note Signature: Deputy Minister

Branch: Conservation Officer Service - Chief CO Other Number: 400552

Link: <https://env.cliff.gov.bc.ca/log/upd/tl/649638/link>

Due Date: 5/15/2023 Date Completed: 5/15/2023 Date Initiated: 5/10/2023 N/A

Item History

5/15/2023 11:46 AM

Petrunik, Nyla ENV:EX [Assignee] has closed this item for the following reason: Completed.

5/15/2023 10:41 AM

Trotter, Clare ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Petrunik, Nyla ENV:EX for action

Hi Nyla, for your team to save to your LAN/Cliff and close eApp/Cliff. Many thanks.

5/15/2023 10:19 AM

Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Trotter, Clare ENV:EX for action

Clare, Please save, then send on to OPR for saving and closing. Thanks. Teresa

5/11/2023 12:39 PM

Rhodes, Angie ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX for action

Hi Teresa, for sending to OPR for saving to Cliff and LAN prior to closing eapp and Cliff logs, thanks

5/10/2023 03:54 PM

Rhodes, Angie ENV:EX [Assignee] added a comment

sent to MO

5/10/2023 02:44 PM

Jardine, Kevin ENV:EX [Assignee] approved the item and forwarded it to Rhodes, Angie ENV:EX for action

Approved

5/10/2023 02:36 PM

Ronda, Haley ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Jardine, Kevin ENV:EX for action

Kevin, as requested, INs for submission to MO regarding COS oversight and allegations. If approved, please send to Angie for submission to the MO. Thank you.

5/10/2023 02:20 PM

Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Ronda, Haley ENV:EX for action

Haley, Notes have been updated. Teresa

5/10/2023 02:04 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX for action

Hi Teresa, revised as discussed for consideration. Thank you.

5/10/2023 01:59 PM

Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX for action

5/10/2023 01:49 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX added a document: 400552_IN_COS_Allegations_10May23.docx

5/10/2023 01:48 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX added a document: 400552_IN_COS_Oversight_Update_10May23.docx

5/10/2023 01:48 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX deleted a document: 400552_IN_COS_Oversight_Update_10May23.docx

5/10/2023 01:48 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX deleted a document: 400552_IN_COS_Allegations_10May23.docx

5/10/2023 01:43 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX deleted a document: COS_Allegations_IN_Update .docx

5/10/2023 01:42 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX added a document: COS_Allegations_IN_Update .docx

5/10/2023 01:42 PM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX added a document: 400552_IN_COS_Oversight_Update_10May23.docx

5/10/2023 11:26 AM

Ronda, Haley ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX for action
Hi Teresa, can we please ask staff to update the notes to read as information notes opposed to issues notes? Thank you.

5/10/2023 11:10 AM

Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Ronda, Haley ENV:EX for action
Haley, Information put into IN as requested to forward to MO. Teresa

5/10/2023 10:53 AM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX for action
Hi Teresa, as requested, please see attached IN's. Please advise if anything further is required. Thank you, Danielle.

5/10/2023 10:29 AM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX deleted a document: 400552_IN_COS_Oversight_Update .docx

5/10/2023 10:29 AM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX added a document: 400552_IN_COS_Oversight_Update_10May23.docx

5/10/2023 10:28 AM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX added a document: 400552_IN_COS_Allegations_10May23.docx

5/10/2023 10:25 AM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX deleted a document: exec-ops-template-information-note (1).docx

5/10/2023 10:25 AM

Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX deleted a document: 400552_COS_Allegations_IN_Update.docx

Reformatting as requested

5/10/2023 09:32 AM

Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Bell, Danielle L ENV:EX for action
Danielle, DM has requested the documents are put into IN template to share with MO. Thanks. Teresa

5/10/2023 09:31 AM

Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX added a document: DM request materials to be IN for MO.msg

5/10/2023 09:29 AM

Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX added a document: exec-ops-template-information-note (1).docx

5/10/2023 09:10 AM

Trotter, Clare ENV:EX [Assignee] forwarded an eApprovals item to Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX for action
Added to Cliff and eApps. I couldn't find the place to add the Cliff & eApp numbers in the documents so please add if needed in the documents.
Thanks.

5/10/2023 09:07 AM

Trotter, Clare ENV:EX created this item

5/10/2023 09:07 AM

Trotter, Clare ENV:EX added a document: COS_Allegations_IN_Update.docx

5/10/2023 09:07 AM

Trotter, Clare ENV:EX added a document: IN_COS_Oversight_Update .docx

From: Ronda, Haley ENV:EX (Haley.Ronda@gov.bc.ca)
To: Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX (Teresa.Klingspohn@gov.bc.ca)
Subject: RE: FOR DM - COS Issues Notes
Sent: 05/09/2023 23:42:17
Message Body:

Hi Teresa,

May I please ask staff to put these into our IN templates? Kevin would like to send to the MO.

Thanks!

From: Klingspohn, Teresa ENV:EX <Teresa.Klingspohn@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 4:03 PM
To: Ronda, Haley ENV:EX <Haley.Ronda@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: FOR DM - COS Issues Notes

Hi Haley,

Please find attached updated COS issues notes on oversight and workplace allegations. These have been reviewed by ADM Standen and CCO Schley. Jim asked for them to be forwarded to Kevin.

Thanks.

Teresa

Teresa Klingspohn (she/her)

Executive Administrative Assistant, ADMO

Jim Standen, Assistant Deputy Minister

Conservation and Recreation Division | Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
236-478-1543 | Teresa.Klingspohn@gov.bc.ca

I acknowledge, with gratitude and respect, that I live and work on the traditional land of the Lekwungen peoples.



INFORMATION NOTE

DATE: May 10, 2023

PREPARED FOR: Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

ISSUE: The Conservation Officer Service and Oversight

KEY FACTS:

- The Conservation Officer Service supports the implementation of third-party oversight as a tool to enhance transparency and public trust.
- The COS has long recognized that enhancing the agency's oversight and accountability framework will help build and maintain public confidence, which is essential to serving communities.
- The COS is continuing discussions with the Ministry of Forests Wildlife Branch to set a path forward to external stakeholder engagement on service and policy issues related to how government responds to human-wildlife conflict.
- The COS is also in discussions regarding the practice of hiring an external lawyer or judge to conduct investigations into alleged serious misconduct complaints.
- Currently, the COS has one active Labour Relations investigation ongoing that is being conducted by an external lawyer.
- The COS also created a new position – Inspector of Provincial Standards - to monitor and provide oversight on complaints and to help increase transparency and public trust.

BACKGROUND:

- The COS has received public criticism for its handling of wildlife. Allegations from interest groups have included that Conservation Officers are killing too many bears when they don't need to, are not attending calls that they should, and are not paying proper care and attention to animal welfare during transport.
- These interest groups are calling for third-party oversight of the COS and the use of body worn cameras, where footage would be able to be obtained through a Freedom of Information request under FOIPPA.

- In early 2020, Bryce Casavant wrote an open letter (on behalf of Pacific Wild) to the Minister of Environment, asking for Conservation Officers to wear body cameras and for an independent body to investigate complaints against officers.
- The COS averages 14 officer conduct complaints per year. Currently, if someone isn't satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they may appeal the decision to the Chief Conservation Officer. The review of the Chief Conservation Officer cannot be appealed.
- If someone is unsatisfied with an outcome after it has gone to the CCO for review, and has exhausted all options, they are free to contact the Office of the Ombudsperson.
- In Feb. 2021, COS executives presented to the *Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act*. The submission included several areas of opportunity where changes to the *Police Act* could increase efficiencies in areas impacting the COS.
- The committee released its report and recommendations in May 2022, recommending further work be done on external oversight. This includes work to bridge the gap between inefficiencies in different agencies with different mandates responsible for oversight in BC.
- An associated timeline should this work proceed is unknown.
- On May 2, 2023, during the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General Estimates debates, MLA Adam Olsen repeatedly raised concerns regarding a lack of external oversight overseeing the COS. The issue was again raised by MLA Olsen during Question Period on May 9th.

DISCUSSION:

The Conservation Officer Service is continuing discussions with the Public Service Agency and Ministry executive to advance the implementation of third-party oversight.

Assistant Deputy Minister

Jim Standen
Conservation and Recreation Division
250-387-1288

Alternate contact for content:

CCO Cam Schley
Conservation Officer Service
s.17

Prepared by:

Danielle Bell
COS Communications
s.17



INFORMATION NOTE

DATE: May 10, 2023

PREPARED FOR: Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

ISSUE: Workplace Allegations within the Conservation Officer Service

KEY FACTS:

- In March 2023, Saanich-North and the Islands MLA Adam Olsen requested a meeting with Environment and Climate Change Strategy Minister Heyman regarding several complaints he received alleging racism, misogyny and homophobia experienced by officers within the COS.
- On March 29th, senior staff - including the COS - met with MLA Olsen to discuss concerns regarding an unhealthy workplace culture at the COS.
- Due to confidentiality concerns, MLA Olsen did not provide specific details about the allegations.
- MLA Olsen requested Minister Heyman look into these allegations and take appropriate action as necessary.
- On May 2, during the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General Estimates debates, MLA Olsen stated he had been receiving information about an unhealthy culture of homophobia, transphobia, bullying and racism at the COS and had been working through various channels at the BC government to address concerns.
- MLA Olsen also stated he had been working to deal with these issues over the last several months but had not found accountability among government.
- Currently, the Public Service Agency is working to retain an external third-party company to independently investigate and assess the culture of, and allegations related to, the COS.
- Addressing allegations of inappropriate behaviour in the workplace is required under BC Public Service policies, collective agreements and the law.

Programs for COS staff and new hires

- Since 2020, GBA+ training has been mandatory for all COS staff.
- New recruits are also required to take cross-cultural awareness training at the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy.

Statistics and Initiatives

- In 2022, more than 60% of new hire recruits were female.
- The COS has two positions dedicated to overseeing First Nations outreach and initiatives throughout the province, in part to build on efforts strengthening relationships with Indigenous Nations across BC.
- The COS also continues to work proactively with secondary institutions to promote the inclusion of potential recruits to the service.

BACKGROUND:

- Since 2013, there have been seven COS complaints - initiated externally or internally – in the following categories:
 - 0 – Misogyny;
 - 0 – Sexism;
 - 0 – Homophobic;
 - 3 - Inappropriate Sexual conduct/language, and
 - 4 – Racism.
- Of the seven Professional Standards Investigations (PSI) matters, only three were founded/substantiated. The remaining four matters were either unsubstantiated, dismissed, or withdrawn.

COS Workplace Training and Statistics

- **2018:** The COS joined the PSA provincial working group within the GBA+2 initiative; training was completed.
- **2019:** GBA+ 2 Committee works and meetings continued.
- **2020:** The COS GBA +2 initiative was shared with Provincial Team Leadership and COS Executive at an in-person meeting. The agenda included recruitment and inclusion discussions, as well as a GBA Program Review Guide and BCPS Women in Leadership Report.
- **2020:** The COS GBA+ training is made mandatory for all staff.
- **2020:** The COS showed 96% of members completed this training – the highest completion rate of any division and ministry.
- **2021:** GBA+2 mandatory training resumes for all new hires. COS remains in the 90th percentile. This training continues to be taken on an annual basis within the agency.
- **2021:** The COS introduced multiculturalism reporting.

DISCUSSION:

Ministry executive and senior leadership at the COS are working to discuss and implement any additional workplace policies and training to help prevent and address inappropriate behaviour.

The COS also welcomes an independent assessment of its workplace culture and is committed to following through on any findings. A timeline associated with this process is unknown at this time.

Assistant Deputy Minister

Jim Standen

Conservation and Recreation Division

250-387-1288

Alternate contact for content:

CCO Cam Schley

Conservation Officer Service

s.17

Prepared by:

Danielle Bell

COS Communications

s.17